

"I urge the Speaker to include genuinely pro-life language into one of the most important pieces of legislation we will likely consider in our lifetime"

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence submitted the following remarks on the floor of the House today, urging a vote on an amendment which would explicitly ban abortion coverage in the Democrat health care bill:

"For 30 years, the pro-life beliefs of millions of Americans have been protected by the federal government. Congress passed the Hyde Amendment in 1976 which bars federal funds from paying for elective abortions. This amendment must be renewed yearly in the annual Labor, Health & Human Services Appropriations bill.

"However, the programs included in the Pelosi health care bill, including the government-run plan, are not funded by or beholden to this annual appropriations bill and are therefore not subject to the Hyde amendment.

"Legislation of this magnitude must contain clear and decisive language that makes certain that federal funds are not used to pay for elective abortions. References to provisions in current law that are susceptible to being stripped in the annual appropriations process is not any kind of protection at all.

"The Pelosi health care plan is also a clear departure from the long-standing federal policy against federal funding of health plans that cover abortions. The Pelosi bill explicitly permits federal funds to subsidize health plans that cover abortions.

"The bill's proponents will claim that public dollars are separated from private insurance premiums, but this is nothing more than a slick accounting gimmick rejected by the pro-life community at-large.

"According to the non-partisan Congressional Research Service, any outlay by a government run plan for abortions or health care services would by definition be federal funds. The Pelosi health care bill also includes a mandate requiring at least one insurance plan offered in the federal exchange to cover abortions.

"The bill before us is a clear departure from the longstanding Hyde law and violates the beliefs of millions of pro-life Americans who find abortion morally unconscionable.

"I urge Speaker Pelosi to allow an up-or-down vote on a truly pro-life amendment - the Stupak/Pitts amendment. The Stupak/Pitts amendment would prevent federal dollars from funding abortion and preserve the long-standing federal policy of protecting the unborn. In a last-ditch effort to garner votes, the Democrat majority plans to propose a rule for considering the legislation that claims to "fix" the pro-life concerns in the bill, but the new language still allows federal funding for abortions. This is little more than a political scheme, and the language has been rejected by every major pro-life group in the country.

"I urge the Speaker to include genuinely pro-life language into one of the most important pieces of legislation we will likely consider in our lifetime. A vote on the Stupak/Pitts amendment must be allowed to ensure the protection and safety of America's future - our children."